

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 6445
OFFERED BY MR. MICHAUD OF MAINE

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Health Care
3 Policy Enhancement Act of 2008”.

4 SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION OF CERTAIN COPAY-
5 MENTS FROM VETERANS WHO ARE CATA-
6 STROPHICALLY DISABLED.

7 (a) PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION OF COPAYMENTS
8 AND OTHER FEES FOR HOSPITAL OR NURSING HOME
9 CARE.—Section 1710 of title 38, United States Code, is
10 amended—

11 (1) by redesignating subsection (h) as sub-
12 section (i); and

13 (2) by inserting after subsection (g) the fol-
14 lowing new subsection (h):

15 “(h) Notwithstanding any other provision of this sec-
16 tion, a veteran who is catastrophically disabled shall not
17 be required to make any payment otherwise required

1 under subsection (f) or (g) for the receipt of hospital care
2 or nursing home care under this section.”.

3 (b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Subsection (h) of section
4 1710 of title 38, United States Code, as added by sub-
5 section (a), shall apply with respect to hospital care or
6 nursing home care provided after the date of the enact-
7 ment of this Act.

8 **SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VET-**
9 **ERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE COUNSELING**
10 **FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF VETERANS RE-**
11 **CEIVING NON-SERVICE-CONNECTED TREAT-**
12 **MENT.**

13 Section 1782(b) of title 38, United States Code, is
14 amended by striking “if__” and all that follows and insert-
15 ing a period.

16 **SEC. 4. COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON PAIN MANAGEMENT.**

17 (a) **COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REQUIRED.**—Not later
18 than October 1, 2008, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
19 shall develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the
20 management of pain experienced by veterans enrolled for
21 health care services provided by the Department of Vet-
22 erans Affairs.

23 (b) **SCOPE OF POLICY.**—The policy required by sub-
24 section (a) shall cover each of the following:

1 (1) The systemwide management of acute and
2 chronic pain experienced by veterans.

3 (2) The standard of care for pain management
4 to be used throughout the Department.

5 (3) The consistent application of pain assess-
6 ments to be used throughout the Department.

7 (4) The assurance of prompt and appropriate
8 pain care treatment and management by the Depart-
9 ment, systemwide, when medically necessary.

10 (5) The Department's program of research re-
11 lated to acute and chronic pain suffered by veterans,
12 including pain attributable to central and peripheral
13 nervous system damage characteristic of injuries in-
14 curred in modern warfare.

15 (6) The Department's program of pain care
16 education and training for health care personnel of
17 the Department.

18 (7) The Department's program of patient edu-
19 cation for veterans suffering from acute or chronic
20 pain and their families.

21 (c) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall revise the policy
22 developed under subsection (a) on a periodic basis in ac-
23 cordance with experience and evolving best practice guide-
24 lines.

1 (d) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall develop the
2 policy developed under subsection (a), and revise such pol-
3 icy under subsection (c), in consultation with veterans
4 service organizations and organizations with expertise in
5 the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and management of
6 pain.

7 (e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
9 after the date of the completion and initial imple-
10 mentation of the policy under subsection (a) and on
11 October 1 of every fiscal year thereafter through fis-
12 cal year 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the
13 Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
14 the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
15 Representatives a report on the implementation of
16 the policy developed under subsection (a).

17 (2) CONTENTS.—The report required by para-
18 graph (1) shall include the following:

19 (A) A description of the policy developed
20 and implemented under subsection (a) and any
21 revisions to such policy under subsection (c).

22 (B) A description of the performance
23 measures used to determine the effectiveness of
24 such policy in improving pain care for veterans
25 systemwide.

1 (C) An assessment of the adequacy of the
2 Department's pain management services based
3 on a survey of patients managed in Department
4 clinics.

5 (D) An assessment of the Department's re-
6 search programs relevant to the treatment of
7 the types of acute and chronic pain suffered by
8 veterans.

9 (E) An assessment of the training provided
10 to Department health care personnel with re-
11 spect to the diagnosis, treatment, and manage-
12 ment of acute and chronic pain.

13 (F) An assessment of the Department's
14 pain care related patient education programs.

15 (f) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—
16 In this section, the term “veterans service organization”
17 means any organization recognized by the Secretary for
18 the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title
19 38, United States Code.

20 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSOLIDATED PATIENT AC-**
21 **COUNTING CENTERS.**

22 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—Chapter 17 of
23 title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after
24 section 1729A the following:

1 **“§ 1729B. Consolidated patient accounting centers**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years after the
3 date of enactment of this section, the Secretary of Vet-
4 erans Affairs shall establish not more than seven consoli-
5 dated patient accounting centers for conducting industry-
6 modeled regionalized billing and collection activities of the
7 Department.

8 “(b) FUNCTIONS.—The centers shall carry out the
9 following functions:

10 “(1) Reengineer and integrate all business proc-
11 esses of the revenue cycle of the Department.

12 “(2) Standardize and coordinate all activities of
13 the Department related to the revenue cycle for all
14 healthcare services furnished to veterans for non-
15 service connected medical conditions.

16 “(3) Apply commercial industry standards for
17 measures of access, timeliness, and performance
18 metrics with respect to revenue enhancement of the
19 Department.

20 “(4) Apply other requirements with respect to
21 such revenue cycle improvement as the Secretary
22 may specify.”.

23 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
24 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
25 after the item relating to section 1729A the following:

“1729B. Consolidated patient accounting centers.”.

1 **SEC. 6. SIMPLIFYING AND UPDATING NATIONAL STAND-**
2 **ARDS TO ENCOURAGE TESTING OF THE**
3 **HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS.**

4 Section 124 of the Veterans' Benefits and Services
5 Act of 1988 (38 U.S.C. 4133 note; 102 Stat. 505) and
6 the item relating to such section in the table of contents
7 of such Act (102 Stat. 487) are repealed.

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from collecting certain copayments from veterans who are catastrophically disabled, and for other purposes.".

